

Claims:

1. A process for preparing S-(2-aminoethyl)-2-methyl-L-cysteine comprising the steps of

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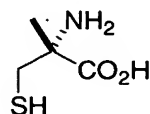
(i) reacting an alcohol of Formula 2



Formula 2

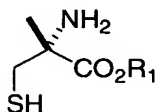
wherein R_1 is C-1 to C-8 alkyl or cycloalkyl with 2-methyl-L-cysteine (Formula 1),

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Formula 1

15 or a salt thereof, to give the cysteine ester of Formula 3

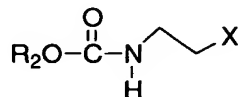


Formula 3

20 wherein R_1 is as defined for Formula 2;

(ii) reacting the thiolester of Formula 3 is with an alkylating reagent of Formula 4

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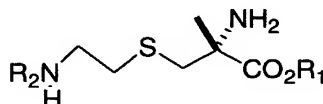
Formula 4

wherein R_2 is selected from the group C₁₋₆ alkyl, C₁₋₆ alkenyl, trichloroethoxy,

tri-C₁₋₆-alkylsilylethyl, benzyl and phenyl;

X is selected from the Cl, Br, I, -SO₂Ar, -SO₂CH₃, -SO₂CF₃ ;

to provide the cysteine derivative of Formula 5, or a salt thereof ,



Formula 5

wherein R₁ and R₂ are as defined for Formulas 2 and 4; and

(iii) hydrolysis of the intermediate of step (ii) to provide the title compound.

2. A process according to claim 1 wherein R₁ is isobutyl.

3. A process according to claim 1 wherein R₂ is 1,1-dimethylethoxycarbonyl.

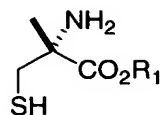
4. A process according to claim 1 wherein R₁ is C₁-C₈

5. A process according to claim 1 wherein R₂ is C₁₋₆ alkyl, C₁₋₆ alkenyl, trichloroethoxy, tri-C₁₋₆-alkylsilylethyl, benzyl or phenyl;

6. A process according to claim 1 further comprising the use of a tertiary organic base in an organic solvent in step ii.

7. A process according to claim 1 further comprising the use of a two phase mixture of a suitable immiscible organic solvent, an aqueous solvent and a phase transfer agent of the structure R₁R₂R₃R₄NX wherein R₁-R₄ are independently C₁ to C₁₆ alkyl or benzyl and X is a suitable counter ion.

8. A compound of Formula 1

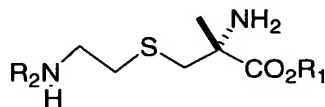


Formula 1

5 wherein R_1 is C-3 to C-8 alkyl or cycloalkyl.

9. A compound of Formula I wherein R_1 is isobutyl.

10. A compound of Formula II, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof,
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Formula II

wherein wherein R_1 is C-3 to C-8 alkyl or cycloalkyl and R_2 is selected from the group
15 C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{1-6} alkenyl, trichloroethoxy, tri- C_{1-6} -alkylsilylethyl, benzyl and phenyl.

11. A compound of Claim 10 wherein the pharmaceutically acceptable salt is benzoate.

20 12. The use of a compound of Formula 1 for preparing compounds of Formula 2.

13. The use of a compound of Formula 2 for preparing S-(2-aminoethyl)-2-methyl-L-cysteine.

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